

September 19, 2019

The Honorable Ajit V. Pai
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Pai:

We write to request that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) discard any plans for setting an overall cap for the Universal Service Fund (USF) programs. Such a proposal would harm broadband deployment, rural health care opportunities, classroom learning, and life-long learning through public libraries by forcing them to compete in order to receive necessary funds. The USF programs have been key to moving the country toward the goal of universal connectivity throughout America and placing an overall cap on the USF programs would threaten this necessary progress.

The four programs that comprise the USF have enjoyed bipartisan support for decades, and reflect the underlying goals of communication policy in our country. The E-rate program specifically ensures that all students from urban and rural neighborhoods can connect to the internet and be afforded all of the knowledge and opportunity that connectivity provides. In today's economy, broadband access is a necessity, not a luxury, and the Lifeline program embraces this principle by providing essential services to lower-income Americans. Additionally, the Rural Health Care program enables skilled nursing facilities and health professionals to have access to vital communication services that assist them in providing health care in rural communities. Communication and broadband access is also important for every person, which is why it is crucial that the Connect America Fund accelerate broadband infrastructure in needed areas, particularly rural communities.

Each program that is a part of USF plays an indispensable role in achieving the ultimate goal of USF, access to communication services for every American. The proposal to place a universal cap on these programs is a direct assault on the FCC's mission of bridging the digital divide. The proposal to combine the sub-caps for the E-Rate and Rural Health Care funds is particularly troubling. None of the USF programs should be pitted against each other and forced to vie for a piece of the pie. Moreover, the FCC's request for comment on "prioritizing the funding among the four universal service programs" violates Congress's legislative intent in enacting the USF.

We believe that all four of these programs should be able to continue to operate and thrive independently without the constraint of a universal cap. Program recipients should also be able to rely on consistent funding for their program and without living in fear that their funding will be slashed in order to provide for the other equally deserving programs.

We strongly urge the Commission to abide by its statutory commitment to students, health care providers, librarians, and those in rural communities.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



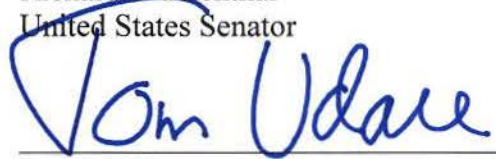
Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



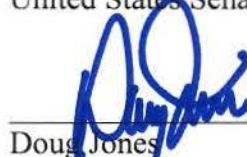
Tom Udall
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



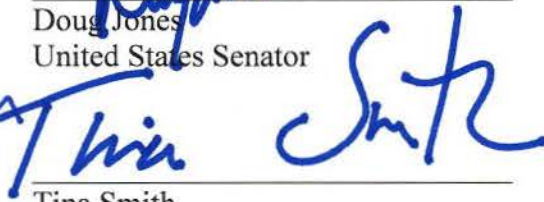
Patty Murray
United States Senator



Doug Jones
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



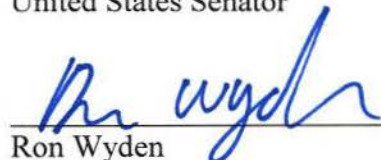
Tina Smith
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



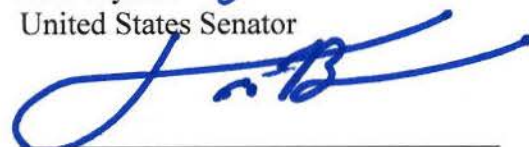
Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator




Bernard Sanders
United States Senator

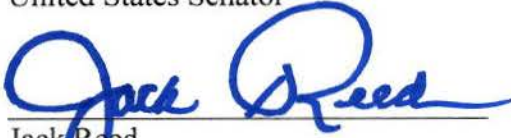


Cory A. Booker
United States Senator

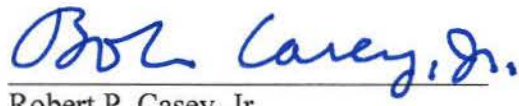


Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator


Jack Reed
United States Senator


Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator

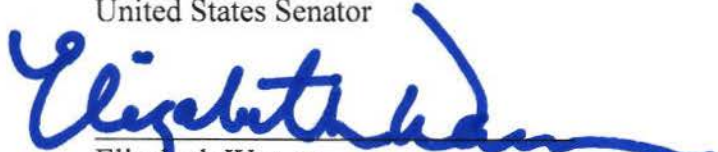

Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator


Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator

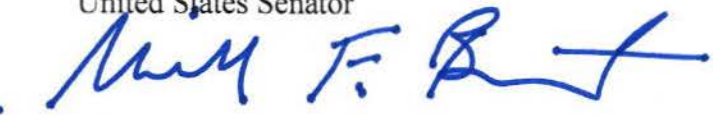

Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator


Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator


Sherrod Brown
United States Senator


Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator


Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator


Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator


Jacky Rosen
United States Senator


Martin Heinrich
United States Senator

CC: The Honorable Michael O'Rielly, Commissioner,
The Honorable Brendan Carr, Commissioner
The Honorable Jessica Rosenworcel, Commissioner
The Honorable Geoffrey Starks, Commissioner



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
United States Senate
425 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

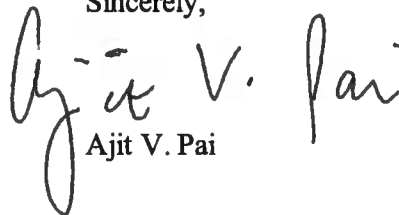
Dear Senator Klobuchar:

Thank you for your letter regarding the proposal to establish a cap on the Universal Service Fund.

As you know, in May, the Commission released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeking comment on possible changes to the budget structures of the four universal service programs, and on ways to promote overall efficiency, fairness, and sustainability of the Fund. We initiated this proceeding mindful of our obligation to safeguard the funds ultimately paid by consumers and to ensure that these important programs are funded appropriately. We observed that each of the USF programs is already capped or operating under a targeted budget. And we sought comment on a proposed overall annual budget of \$11.42 billion, which is more than *three billion dollars* above current USF program disbursements. This amount itself would be adjusted regularly for inflation.

Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,


Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Bernard Sanders
United States Senate
332 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Sanders:

Thank you for your letter regarding the proposal to establish a cap on the Universal Service Fund.

As you know, in May, the Commission released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeking comment on possible changes to the budget structures of the four universal service programs, and on ways to promote overall efficiency, fairness, and sustainability of the Fund. We initiated this proceeding mindful of our obligation to safeguard the funds ultimately paid by consumers and to ensure that these important programs are funded appropriately. We observed that each of the USF programs is already capped or operating under a targeted budget. And we sought comment on a proposed overall annual budget of \$11.42 billion, which is more than *three billion dollars* above current USF program disbursements. This amount itself would be adjusted regularly for inflation.

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Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senate
509 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Cardin:

Thank you for your letter regarding the proposal to establish a cap on the Universal Service Fund.

As you know, in May, the Commission released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeking comment on possible changes to the budget structures of the four universal service programs, and on ways to promote overall efficiency, fairness, and sustainability of the Fund. We initiated this proceeding mindful of our obligation to safeguard the funds ultimately paid by consumers and to ensure that these important programs are funded appropriately. We observed that each of the USF programs is already capped or operating under a targeted budget. And we sought comment on a proposed overall annual budget of \$11.42 billion, which is more than *three billion dollars* above current USF program disbursements. This amount itself would be adjusted regularly for inflation.

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Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Bob Casey
United States Senate
393 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

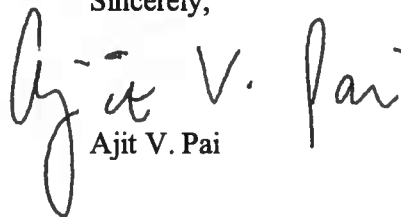
Dear Senator Casey:

Thank you for your letter regarding the proposal to establish a cap on the Universal Service Fund.

As you know, in May, the Commission released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeking comment on possible changes to the budget structures of the four universal service programs, and on ways to promote overall efficiency, fairness, and sustainability of the Fund. We initiated this proceeding mindful of our obligation to safeguard the funds ultimately paid by consumers and to ensure that these important programs are funded appropriately. We observed that each of the USF programs is already capped or operating under a targeted budget. And we sought comment on a proposed overall annual budget of \$11.42 billion, which is more than *three billion dollars* above current USF program disbursements. This amount itself would be adjusted regularly for inflation.

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Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senate
516 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Cortez Masto:

Thank you for your letter regarding the proposal to establish a cap on the Universal Service Fund.

As you know, in May, the Commission released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeking comment on possible changes to the budget structures of the four universal service programs, and on ways to promote overall efficiency, fairness, and sustainability of the Fund. We initiated this proceeding mindful of our obligation to safeguard the funds ultimately paid by consumers and to ensure that these important programs are funded appropriately. We observed that each of the USF programs is already capped or operating under a targeted budget. And we sought comment on a proposed overall annual budget of \$11.42 billion, which is more than *three billion dollars* above current USF program disbursements. This amount itself would be adjusted regularly for inflation.

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Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

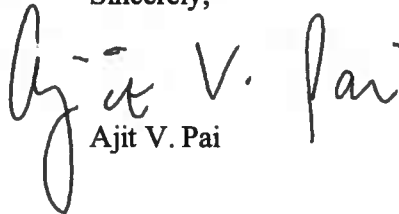
Dear Senator Schumer:

Thank you for your letter regarding the proposal to establish a cap on the Universal Service Fund.

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Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
United States Senate
110 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Van Hollen:

Thank you for your letter regarding the proposal to establish a cap on the Universal Service Fund.

As you know, in May, the Commission released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeking comment on possible changes to the budget structures of the four universal service programs, and on ways to promote overall efficiency, fairness, and sustainability of the Fund. We initiated this proceeding mindful of our obligation to safeguard the funds ultimately paid by consumers and to ensure that these important programs are funded appropriately. We observed that each of the USF programs is already capped or operating under a targeted budget. And we sought comment on a proposed overall annual budget of \$11.42 billion, which is more than *three billion dollars* above current USF program disbursements. This amount itself would be adjusted regularly for inflation.

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Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Cory Booker
United States Senate
717 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Booker:

Thank you for your letter regarding the proposal to establish a cap on the Universal Service Fund.

As you know, in May, the Commission released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeking comment on possible changes to the budget structures of the four universal service programs, and on ways to promote overall efficiency, fairness, and sustainability of the Fund. We initiated this proceeding mindful of our obligation to safeguard the funds ultimately paid by consumers and to ensure that these important programs are funded appropriately. We observed that each of the USF programs is already capped or operating under a targeted budget. And we sought comment on a proposed overall annual budget of \$11.42 billion, which is more than *three billion dollars* above current USF program disbursements. This amount itself would be adjusted regularly for inflation.

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Ajit V. Pai



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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Doug Jones
United States Senate
326 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

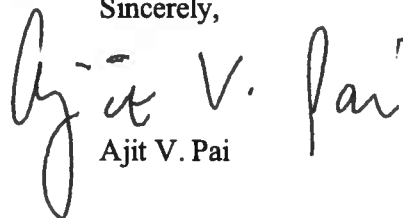
Dear Senator Jones:

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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OFFICE OF
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October 15, 2019

The Honorable Edward J. Markey
United States Senate
255 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

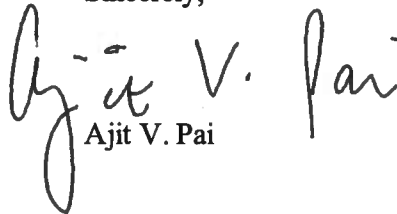
Dear Senator Markey:

Thank you for your letter regarding the proposal to establish a cap on the Universal Service Fund.

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Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Elizabeth Warren
United States Senate
317 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Warren:

Thank you for your letter regarding the proposal to establish a cap on the Universal Service Fund.

As you know, in May, the Commission released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeking comment on possible changes to the budget structures of the four universal service programs, and on ways to promote overall efficiency, fairness, and sustainability of the Fund. We initiated this proceeding mindful of our obligation to safeguard the funds ultimately paid by consumers and to ensure that these important programs are funded appropriately. We observed that each of the USF programs is already capped or operating under a targeted budget. And we sought comment on a proposed overall annual budget of \$11.42 billion, which is more than *three billion dollars* above current USF program disbursements. This amount itself would be adjusted regularly for inflation.

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Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Jack Reed
United States Senate
728 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

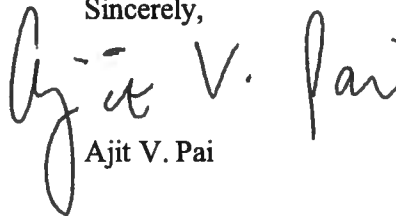
Dear Senator Reed:

Thank you for your letter regarding the proposal to establish a cap on the Universal Service Fund.

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Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Jacky Rosen
United States Senate
G12 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Rosen:

Thank you for your letter regarding the proposal to establish a cap on the Universal Service Fund.

As you know, in May, the Commission released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeking comment on possible changes to the budget structures of the four universal service programs, and on ways to promote overall efficiency, fairness, and sustainability of the Fund. We initiated this proceeding mindful of our obligation to safeguard the funds ultimately paid by consumers and to ensure that these important programs are funded appropriately. We observed that each of the USF programs is already capped or operating under a targeted budget. And we sought comment on a proposed overall annual budget of \$11.42 billion, which is more than *three billion dollars* above current USF program disbursements. This amount itself would be adjusted regularly for inflation.

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Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senate
506 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Shaheen:

Thank you for your letter regarding the proposal to establish a cap on the Universal Service Fund.

As you know, in May, the Commission released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeking comment on possible changes to the budget structures of the four universal service programs, and on ways to promote overall efficiency, fairness, and sustainability of the Fund. We initiated this proceeding mindful of our obligation to safeguard the funds ultimately paid by consumers and to ensure that these important programs are funded appropriately. We observed that each of the USF programs is already capped or operating under a targeted budget. And we sought comment on a proposed overall annual budget of \$11.42 billion, which is more than *three billion dollars* above current USF program disbursements. This amount itself would be adjusted regularly for inflation.

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Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Kamala D. Harris
United States Senate
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

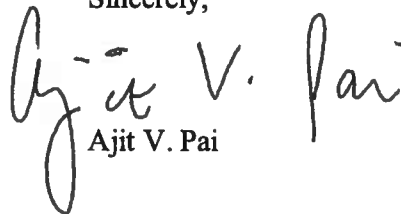
Dear Senator Harris:

Thank you for your letter regarding the proposal to establish a cap on the Universal Service Fund.

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Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senate
478 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Gillibrand:

Thank you for your letter regarding the proposal to establish a cap on the Universal Service Fund.

As you know, in May, the Commission released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeking comment on possible changes to the budget structures of the four universal service programs, and on ways to promote overall efficiency, fairness, and sustainability of the Fund. We initiated this proceeding mindful of our obligation to safeguard the funds ultimately paid by consumers and to ensure that these important programs are funded appropriately. We observed that each of the USF programs is already capped or operating under a targeted budget. And we sought comment on a proposed overall annual budget of \$11.42 billion, which is more than *three billion dollars* above current USF program disbursements. This amount itself would be adjusted regularly for inflation.

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Ajit V. Pai



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THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senate
317 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Sinema:

Thank you for your letter regarding the proposal to establish a cap on the Universal Service Fund.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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OFFICE OF
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October 15, 2019

The Honorable Maggie Hassan
United States Senate
330 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

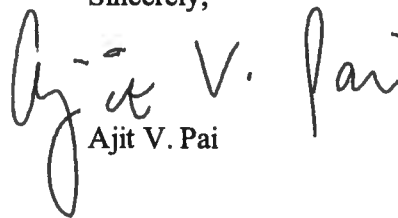
Dear Senator Hassan:

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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October 15, 2019

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
United States Senate
303 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

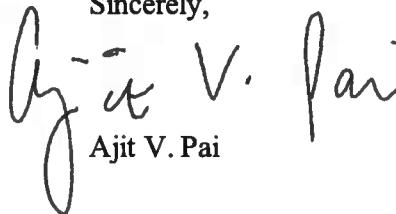
Dear Senator Heinrich:

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Michael Bennet
United States Senate
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

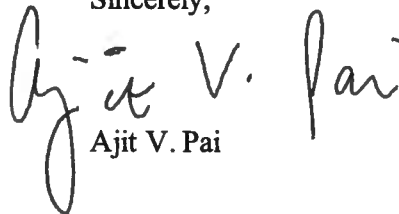
Dear Senator Bennet:

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Sincerely,


Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Patty Murray
United States Senate
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Murray:

Thank you for your letter regarding the proposal to establish a cap on the Universal Service Fund.

As you know, in May, the Commission released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeking comment on possible changes to the budget structures of the four universal service programs, and on ways to promote overall efficiency, fairness, and sustainability of the Fund. We initiated this proceeding mindful of our obligation to safeguard the funds ultimately paid by consumers and to ensure that these important programs are funded appropriately. We observed that each of the USF programs is already capped or operating under a targeted budget. And we sought comment on a proposed overall annual budget of \$11.42 billion, which is more than *three billion dollars* above current USF program disbursements. This amount itself would be adjusted regularly for inflation.

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Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
United States Senate
706 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Blumenthal:

Thank you for your letter regarding the proposal to establish a cap on the Universal Service Fund.

As you know, in May, the Commission released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeking comment on possible changes to the budget structures of the four universal service programs, and on ways to promote overall efficiency, fairness, and sustainability of the Fund. We initiated this proceeding mindful of our obligation to safeguard the funds ultimately paid by consumers and to ensure that these important programs are funded appropriately. We observed that each of the USF programs is already capped or operating under a targeted budget. And we sought comment on a proposed overall annual budget of \$11.42 billion, which is more than *three billion dollars* above current USF program disbursements. This amount itself would be adjusted regularly for inflation.

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Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
United States Senate
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

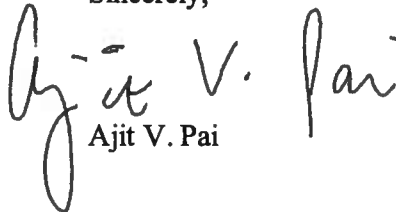
Dear Senator Durbin:

Thank you for your letter regarding the proposal to establish a cap on the Universal Service Fund.

As you know, in May, the Commission released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeking comment on possible changes to the budget structures of the four universal service programs, and on ways to promote overall efficiency, fairness, and sustainability of the Fund. We initiated this proceeding mindful of our obligation to safeguard the funds ultimately paid by consumers and to ensure that these important programs are funded appropriately. We observed that each of the USF programs is already capped or operating under a targeted budget. And we sought comment on a proposed overall annual budget of \$11.42 billion, which is more than *three billion dollars* above current USF program disbursements. This amount itself would be adjusted regularly for inflation.

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Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Ron Wyden
United States Senate
221 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Wyden:

Thank you for your letter regarding the proposal to establish a cap on the Universal Service Fund.

As you know, in May, the Commission released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeking comment on possible changes to the budget structures of the four universal service programs, and on ways to promote overall efficiency, fairness, and sustainability of the Fund. We initiated this proceeding mindful of our obligation to safeguard the funds ultimately paid by consumers and to ensure that these important programs are funded appropriately. We observed that each of the USF programs is already capped or operating under a targeted budget. And we sought comment on a proposed overall annual budget of \$11.42 billion, which is more than *three billion dollars* above current USF program disbursements. This amount itself would be adjusted regularly for inflation.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senate
530 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Whitehouse:

Thank you for your letter regarding the proposal to establish a cap on the Universal Service Fund.

As you know, in May, the Commission released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeking comment on possible changes to the budget structures of the four universal service programs, and on ways to promote overall efficiency, fairness, and sustainability of the Fund. We initiated this proceeding mindful of our obligation to safeguard the funds ultimately paid by consumers and to ensure that these important programs are funded appropriately. We observed that each of the USF programs is already capped or operating under a targeted budget. And we sought comment on a proposed overall annual budget of \$11.42 billion, which is more than *three billion dollars* above current USF program disbursements. This amount itself would be adjusted regularly for inflation.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Sherrod Brown
United States Senate
713 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Brown:

Thank you for your letter regarding the proposal to establish a cap on the Universal Service Fund.

As you know, in May, the Commission released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeking comment on possible changes to the budget structures of the four universal service programs, and on ways to promote overall efficiency, fairness, and sustainability of the Fund. We initiated this proceeding mindful of our obligation to safeguard the funds ultimately paid by consumers and to ensure that these important programs are funded appropriately. We observed that each of the USF programs is already capped or operating under a targeted budget. And we sought comment on a proposed overall annual budget of \$11.42 billion, which is more than *three billion dollars* above current USF program disbursements. This amount itself would be adjusted regularly for inflation.

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OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
United States Senate
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Baldwin:

Thank you for your letter regarding the proposal to establish a cap on the Universal Service Fund.

As you know, in May, the Commission released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeking comment on possible changes to the budget structures of the four universal service programs, and on ways to promote overall efficiency, fairness, and sustainability of the Fund. We initiated this proceeding mindful of our obligation to safeguard the funds ultimately paid by consumers and to ensure that these important programs are funded appropriately. We observed that each of the USF programs is already capped or operating under a targeted budget. And we sought comment on a proposed overall annual budget of \$11.42 billion, which is more than *three billion dollars* above current USF program disbursements. This amount itself would be adjusted regularly for inflation.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Tammy Duckworth
United States Senate
524 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

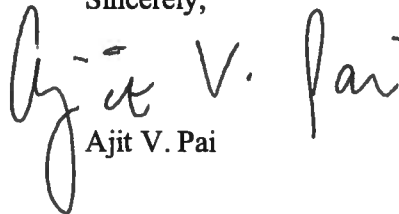
Dear Senator Duckworth:

Thank you for your letter regarding the proposal to establish a cap on the Universal Service Fund.

As you know, in May, the Commission released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeking comment on possible changes to the budget structures of the four universal service programs, and on ways to promote overall efficiency, fairness, and sustainability of the Fund. We initiated this proceeding mindful of our obligation to safeguard the funds ultimately paid by consumers and to ensure that these important programs are funded appropriately. We observed that each of the USF programs is already capped or operating under a targeted budget. And we sought comment on a proposed overall annual budget of \$11.42 billion, which is more than *three billion dollars* above current USF program disbursements. This amount itself would be adjusted regularly for inflation.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Tina Smith
United States Senate
720 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

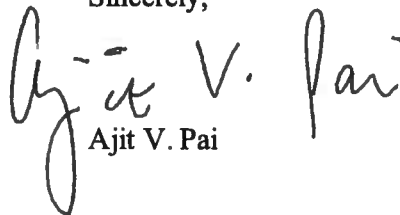
Dear Senator Smith:

Thank you for your letter regarding the proposal to establish a cap on the Universal Service Fund.

As you know, in May, the Commission released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeking comment on possible changes to the budget structures of the four universal service programs, and on ways to promote overall efficiency, fairness, and sustainability of the Fund. We initiated this proceeding mindful of our obligation to safeguard the funds ultimately paid by consumers and to ensure that these important programs are funded appropriately. We observed that each of the USF programs is already capped or operating under a targeted budget. And we sought comment on a proposed overall annual budget of \$11.42 billion, which is more than *three billion dollars* above current USF program disbursements. This amount itself would be adjusted regularly for inflation.

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Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Tom Udall
United States Senate
531 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

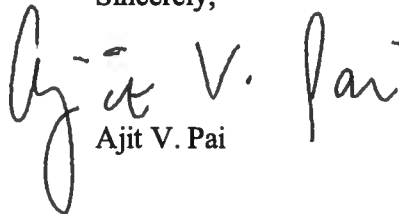
Dear Senator Udall:

Thank you for your letter regarding the proposal to establish a cap on the Universal Service Fund.

As you know, in May, the Commission released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeking comment on possible changes to the budget structures of the four universal service programs, and on ways to promote overall efficiency, fairness, and sustainability of the Fund. We initiated this proceeding mindful of our obligation to safeguard the funds ultimately paid by consumers and to ensure that these important programs are funded appropriately. We observed that each of the USF programs is already capped or operating under a targeted budget. And we sought comment on a proposed overall annual budget of \$11.42 billion, which is more than *three billion dollars* above current USF program disbursements. This amount itself would be adjusted regularly for inflation.

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